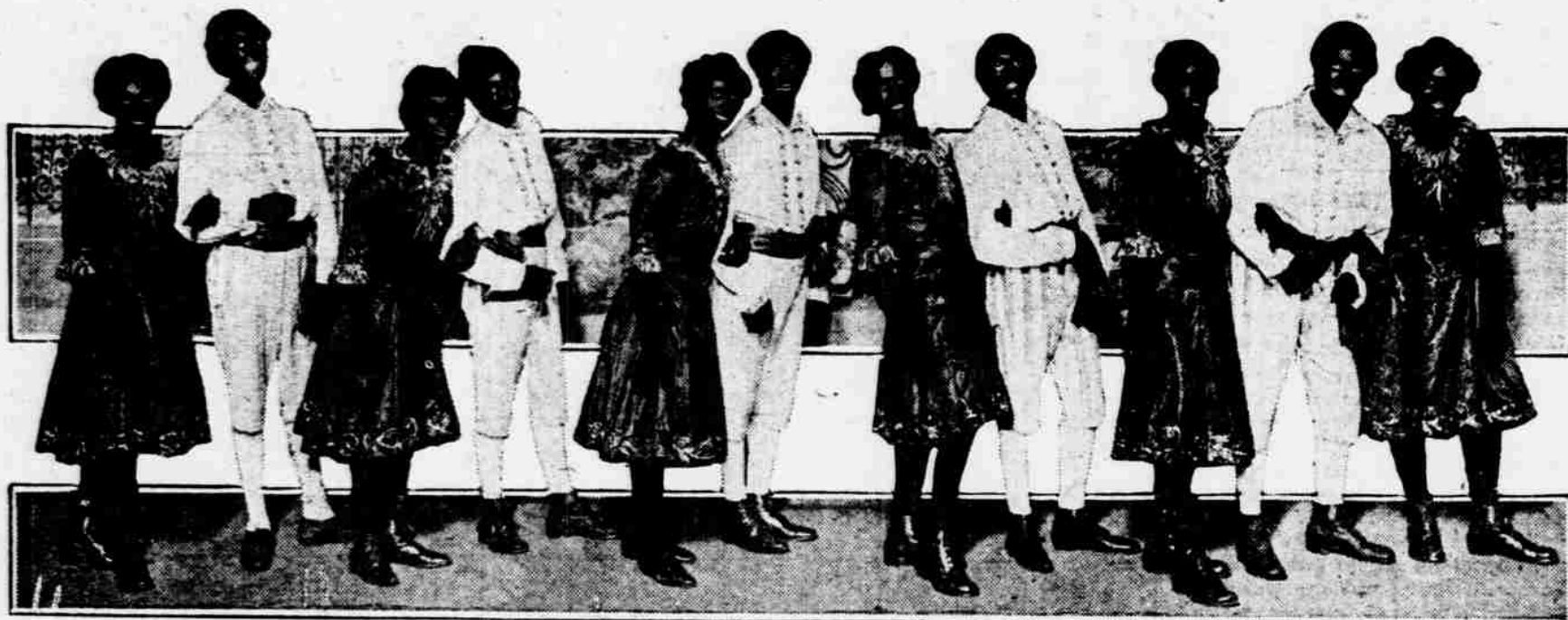


# "Yip, Yip, Yaphank" Outjazzes Broadway

Camp Upton Show at the Century Theatre Forced to Run Extra Week to Meet Civilian Demand—Sergeant Irving Berlin Outdoes Himself in Music and Lyrics



The Mandy chorus in "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," the Camp Upton soldier show now at the Century Theatre.

IN response to a civilian demand that for the moment drown the far away roar of the '75s "Yip, Yip, Yaphank"—which is probably the jazziest entertainment that Sergeant Irving Jazz Berlin ever had a hand in—begins a second and positively last week at the Century Theatre to-morrow, and for seven extra days this wicky-wacky war will have to struggle along without the kick that the 49th Company, Depot Brigade, Camp Upton, is prepared to put into it.

"Yip, Yip, Yaphank" stays purely on its merits. It's a first class show, with first class music. It has a cast that almost anybody in the musical comedy line would be glad to have on the payroll and a chorus that makes up for the knots in its calves and the generally rather prominent jaws and noses under its curls when it starts to sing and dance. The scenery is good, the stunts startling, the staging superb—and yet the whole shooting match was put together in no more time than it took Sergeant Berlin, then Citizen Berlin, to think up the words and music of "Alexander's Ragtime Band."

As a matter of fact it is only three months since the sergeant had to lay off his silk shirts for an olive drab woollen one and start life anew. One day he was at home on Broadway. He knew the ropes; he was admired; he had more best friends than he could call by name. Next day he was at Upton, and a rookie corporal who couldn't even carry a tune was showing him around.

#### Berlin Had to Start All Over.

In the National Army rich man, poor man, beggar man and thief fare alike—unless the thief's been caught at it and his record excludes him. Irving Berlin, who had risen from the lower East Side to be "the kid professor" in a Buffalo rathskellar and from the basement piano stool had lifted himself so high that all Tin Pan Alley was at his feet, had to start again at the bottom.

Berlin hadn't got around to go to any of the Plattsburg camps. Upton received him as a private and he was assigned to the divisional headquarters company.

#### The Pulses of the Weather

THERE appear to exist in the earth's atmosphere "centres of action," which have wide control over climatic conditions and make it possible to foretell the character of the weather long in advance.

One of the most important of all these centres is that about Iceland. According as the atmospheric pressure there is high or low mild or severe winters result in central Europe, and there are those who contend that this influence is also felt on the North American continent.

The North Cape is another similar centre, and between these foci a kind of compensation of action often exists, sometimes at intervals of six months. A warm winter at the North Cape corresponds to a cold winter in Iceland, and is followed by cold winds in central Europe and over the plains of Hungary. The cause of the phenomena, it is thought, is to be found in the variations of the north polar ice cap, which constitutes the great reservoir of cold for the Northern Hemisphere.

From the heights of Headquarters Hill he surveyed the camp, and inside a week he knew what was needed. Inside another week he was ready to tell the staff what it was and how to get it. The National Army is a democratic army and—Irving Berlin is Irving Berlin. He got, or took, his chance.

"Upton has become a sort of clearing house for men going over to France," he said. "They come here from all over the country. Their folks follow them to say goodbye, but there isn't room in camp for the folks. We ought to have a good popular price hotel."

"Quite right," agreed Major-Gen. J. Franklin Bell, Jr., or some one else or other. "But how are we going to get it?"

"Put on a show," said Sergeant Berlin (even then a person of rank and consequence).

"Very good," said Gen. Bell, or whoever. "But who's going to act in it?"

"Easy," replied the Sergeant. "The camp is full of talent. Even in the little time I've had to look around I've seen plenty. Sammy Lee is over a couple of streets from the Hill. He's a clever boy—used to be of Norton & Lee (maybe you wouldn't know 'em?). Then there's Kuy Kendall, who used to dance with the Dolly Sisters and can beat either or both at it. There's two for a starter."

"Anybody else?"

"Nobody," Sergeant Berlin conceded, "but the White Rats. Yesterday I shook hands with Bobby Higgins of Melville & Higgins. Then there's Johnny Murphy of Murphy & Foley, and Harry Green of Green & Parker, and Martie Brenna of Brenna & Powell, and Ray Gordon of Gordon & Hamilton, and Eddie Seneider and Billy Baumann and Johnny Glander. I tell you, they're stripping the stage to keep this war going."

#### Never Had Heard of Stars.

"I can't say," said the Person in Authority, "that I've ever heard of any of them. I mean, they may all be very good in their line, but whom could we have for a star if we were to consider following your advice?"

"I've never tried it," shy-violetly suggested the syncopeated sergeant, "but how about me?"

"And who'll construct the plot?"

"Me."

"And who'll compose the music?"

"Me."

"And who'll execute the—er—lyrics?"

"That is the tactical term, is it not?"

"Me."

"And who'll be responsible for the whole thing?"

"Me."

All this was ten weeks ago. Things weren't settled then and there was no certainty that there ever would be a "Yip, Yip, Yaphank." But Irving Berlin, who never played a sure thing in his life, went hunting for talent through Upton. A month passed before the subject was brought up again. During the month the lack of a hotel big enough to accommodate all camp visitors who might be night stranded was sorely felt, as it has been felt almost every night since Upton was a camp.

"Do you still think, Sergeant," abruptly asked the Person in Authority one day, "that your plan is feasible?"

"Quite, sir," said Sergeant Berlin. "I have a list of 277 principals and chorus and show girls who can put anything over."

"Show girls?"

"Got to have 'em. Look at 'You Know Me, Al' and 'Biff Bang.' Don't worry, sir. We won't have to go out of camp for 'em."

Sergeant Berlin thereupon received his instructions direct from Headquarters Hill to—er—to go to it. Exactly six weeks ago. First of all the sergeant built him a plot which is no less weighty than New York is accustomed to seeing hitched to any show with music. Then, with some regard here and there to the plot, he fashioned himself a book. Then he knocked off lyric after lyric. Then, saving the easiest part for the last, he sat down at his one fingered piano and devised the melodies that the owners of the alertest ears in New York are whistling to-day—"Dream On, Little Soldier Boy," "Hello, Hello, Hello," "I Can Always Find a Little Sunshine in the Y. M. C. A.," "We're on Our Way to France," "All We Do Is Sign the Pay Roll" and "A Toast to My Local Board."

#### Had to Drill and Rehearse, Too.

It was while Sergeant Berlin was attending to these small chores that the Forty-ninth Company, Depot Brigade, was organized. The Depot Battalion is a sort of side line organization. Its personnel is not strictly a part of the division, but men are drawn from it to fill such vacancies as may occur in other units. The Forty-ninth Company, recruited from here, there and everywhere through the camp, 277 strong, quietly took its place in the Depot Brigade. All the 277 had to do was to drill all day and rehearse half the night. Until "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," should have been a fact and have become a memory they were free from other duties.

In camp the versatile sergeant had met an old friend—one Will H. Smith, who had staged two or three Drury Lane productions in London, and while yet within the draft age, had been a Broadway producer for a couple of years. Smith took charge of cast and chorus, and as fast as Berlin ground out a song fitted action to it involving the whole more or less active company. Just a private was Will Smith when he had his army shirt on, but when he stripped to his B. V. D.'s and went to work he made the corporals and sergeants among his 277 blush for their own feeble powers of invective. And he wasn't above shooting a commissioned officer off the stage if such were found in the way.

Always in the background but nevertheless on the job, a committee of commissioned officers had been appointed by the Person in Authority to give Sergeant Berlin a lift. At the top of them all was Major J. B. Brandreth; next in line of seniority Capt. J. G. Benkhart, Capt. J. F. Ackerman and Capt. Frank Glick, the last a one-time Princeton football star who had started his Upton career as civilian athletic director. On the officers' committee the only man who had ever had anything to do with the stage was Lieut. Basil Broadhurst.

Will Smith has the reputation in theatrical circles of being a fast worker, but he had no chance of keeping up with Irving

Berlin, who turned out the following lyrical gem in twelve minutes and set the music to it in fourteen more—or vice versa:

Send a lot of jazz bands over there  
To make the boys feel glad.  
Send a troop of Alexanders  
With their jazz bands out to Flanders;  
Make them play a lot of snappy airs:  
The kind that make you dance.  
It isn't just ammunition and food—  
You've got to keep the boys in a cheerful mood.

So hurry up and send a lot  
Of jazz bands over to France!

In cold type it does not look like much, and even an elocutionist couldn't make it sound like much without the Berlin music; but the rag tune that Sergeant Irv hooked up to the words in the twelve or fourteen minutes, or whatever it was he had to spare, is considered by a good many Broadway critics the best jazz that ever was.

#### Safety Razor Chorus Perfected.

Be that as it may, Sergeant Berlin finally got his book and lyrics and music written and Producer Private Will Smith got his safety razor chorus into twinkle toe condition, and three weeks ago—which was two weeks before "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," went to the public—the whole outfit moved to New York.

The Forty-ninth Company, Depot Brigade, didn't get to flit around the city in off hours like regular rehearsing show folks, for it remained a strictly military organization. Its home was the Seventy-first Regiment Armory. Probably never has a chorus of 200 appeared so punctually for rehearsals. Major Brandreth saw to that. For the chorines it was fall in at the armory and hip, hip in regular military formation to the Century Theatre every morning, and at night it was hip, hip back.

It was at the Century that Sergeant Berlin and Private Smith discovered Leo Clarke, the fat rookie, who plays the cruel corporal in "Yip, Yip, Yaphank," and Adelbert Nagle, who is the motive power inside the trick cat that runs wild along the orchestra rail. In his one week before the public Fatty Clarke has cinched a contract with Cohan & Harris that is guaranteed to hold good if he comes back from overseas, and for the future Nagle is as well fixed. There will always be room for him on the Hippodrome stage—the word has come straight.

#### Friendly Boy, Timid Cat

STANDING on the sidewalk in front of a dwelling house in a midtown street, a garbage can with a cover on it and with some shreds of stuff sticking out from under the cover. A big cat standing on its hind legs at the can, pulling at this stuff and trying to get the cover off.

A little down the street was a small boy, a bright small boy of about 7 years, and when he saw the hungry cat at the can he resolved to help. So he walked up quietly and removed the cover and then stood back a few paces with it, holding the cover up in front of him as a warrior holds his shield.

But the cat had never met a boy like that, and instead of staying to supply itself at the bounteous store thus made so easily accessible, it wheeled and fled.